

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

November 17, 2022

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House
U.S. House of Representatives
H-232, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
House Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
H-204, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Senate Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
S-221, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Senate Minority Leader
U.S. Senate
S-230, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Minority Leader McCarthy, Majority Leader Schumer, and Minority Leader McConnell:

As Co-Chairs of the 105 Member House Mental Health Caucus, we truly appreciate your commitment to address the mental health needs of all Americans in the 117th Congress. **As negotiations progress around end-of-year legislation, we urge you to include H.R. 7666, the Restoring Hope for Mental Health and Well-Being Act, in any final package.**

In June 2022, the U.S. House of Representatives passed H.R. 7666 with overwhelming bipartisan support, 402-20. This vital legislation strengthens and expands more than 30 mental health care and substance use disorder programs that critically provide services to millions of Americans. Furthermore, H.R. 7666 includes provisions that would expand our behavioral health workforce, provide funds to assist states in compliance of mental health parity, eliminate barriers to evidence-based treatment for opioid use disorders, and ensure that state Medicaid programs have the necessary resources to implement and strengthen behavioral health services for children.

We were pleased to see the inclusion of two of our priorities in H.R. 7666. H.R. 721, the Mental Health Services for Students Act, would provide \$130 million in competitive grants for public schools across the country to partner with local mental health professionals to establish comprehensive mental health education, prevention, and services for students and their families. H.R. 2981, the Suicide Prevention Lifeline Improvement Act, would provide \$102 million in increased funding for the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline for the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services to develop and implement an enhanced quality assurance plan, improve data sharing with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and for a pilot program for innovative technologies for suicide prevention.

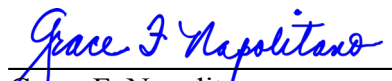
The effects of COVID-19 continue to be well documented, and the need for mental health services only continues to grow. According to an October 2022 Kaiser Family Foundation/CNN Mental Health in America Survey, an overwhelming number of Americans (90 percent) think

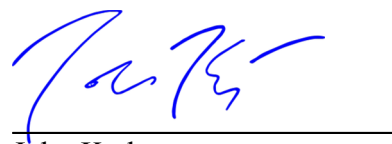
there is a mental health crisis in this country. The survey further found that 51 percent of adults stated they or a family member have experienced a mental health crisis, 47 percent of parents stated the pandemic has had a negative impact on their children's mental health, and half of young adults, ages 18-29, stated they have felt anxious either "always" or "often" in the past year. According to September 2022 provisional data from the CDC's National Center for Health Statistics, after two years of declines in 2019 and 2020, the country has also seen a four percent increase in the number and rate of suicides from 2020 to 2021.

This Congress, both chambers have worked together to secure significant increased funding for existing mental health programs. Passage of H.R. 2471, the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2022, included \$6.5 billion for the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, an increase of \$530 million above the FY2021 enacted level, and S. 2938, the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act, included close to \$2 billion in funding for further investments in children and school-based mental health services.

Both chambers have shown an effort to work in a bipartisan manner to address our ongoing mental health crisis, and it is imperative that we continue to act on this issue. Thank you for your support and attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,


Grace F. Napolitano
Member of Congress


John Katko
Member of Congress